

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day in the Classroom



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## Tips for Teaching 5 A Day



Perhaps teaching healthful eating is new to you. Maybe you've taught it for years but need some new ideas. In either case, adding new classroom activities and lessons may seem like quite a task. Here are some tips to make it fun and easy.

### **Make a commitment**

Provide accurate nutrition information to your students and seek resources that do the same. Take a quick nutrition refresher course via the library or a reliable Internet source before you teach about fruits and vegetables. Call your local health department's nutrition program or the state 5 A Day coordinator ([www.nc5aday.com](http://www.nc5aday.com)) if you have questions about where to go for accurate nutrition information.

### **Use your creativity**

With a little imagination, you can create the best lessons to meet the needs of your class. Use the ideas presented throughout this module or check out other nutrition education materials from the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program Lending Library. To learn more about the NET Lending Library, go to [www.nutritionnc.com](http://www.nutritionnc.com).

### **Add 5 A Day to your whole day**

In preschool programs, it is easy to reinforce the concept of 5 A Day through regular educational activities. Remember that 5 A Day doesn't have to be a new, extra part of your curriculum. For example, when you plan to do a math or counting activity, you can count with grapes and apples, or with peas and carrots - and promote 5 A Day at the same time. Or when you are teaching colors, you can use all the beautiful colors found naturally in produce. Fruits and vegetables can be used in any area of preschool development - social, cognitive, emotional and physical.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## Introducing the 5 A Day Concept to Preschool Children



Preschool is the perfect time to introduce the concept of 5 A Day to children. They are learning to count, often with those five little fingers on each hand or five little toes on a foot. Many of them know how to do a “high-five” or how to “gimme five” for a job well done.

When you first begin a 5 A Day promotion in your center, you need to introduce it in an age-appropriate way to staff, kids and parents. There are dozens of fun, easy ways to do this in groups or one-on-one. Here are some ideas.

- Create a flannel board story using fruits and vegetables.
- Explore a bag of fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, frozen and/or dried) and discuss colors, shapes, textures and tastes.
- Invite parents to join you for a field trip to the produce department in your local supermarket or grocery store, or to a restaurant or farmer’s market.
- Enjoy a cooking activity to make a fruit salad, vegetable soup, fruit pizza or any other 5 A Day recipe – and invite parents to join the fun.
- Check the daily menu for fruits and vegetables, then discuss the colors, tastes and textures for those 5 A Day foods at mealtime.
- Do a circle activity where children match fruit and vegetable pictures or plastic produce models.
- Pass around and talk about real food or food models at a circle time or in a small group.
- Set up a grocery store or produce department in a dramatic play area with produce models and baskets.
- Read a book or sing a song about fruits and vegetables.

Once you have introduced the idea of 5 A Day to the children in your care, you will need to reinforce the concept – over and over again. The above ideas also make great ways to reinforce the 5 A Day message as well as to introduce it.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## Five Easy Ways to Reinforce 5 A Day Messages in Child Care Settings



### 1. **Use any delicious menu to discuss food choices, the Food Guide Pyramid...AND 5 A Day**

You can do this in circle time or while kids are getting ready for a meal...you can do this anytime, anywhere. For example: "I wonder what yummy fruits and vegetables we have for lunch today. I like to eat those fruits and vegetables to get my 5 A Day. Do you remember how many fruits and vegetables kids need to eat every day?" The Food Guide Pyramid for Children can be found at [www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/](http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/).

### 2. **At mealtime, talk about all the tasty foods from your kitchen...AND about 5 A Day**

You can talk about the juice or fruit at breakfast or about the salad and vegetables at lunch...you can talk about the tasty treats at snack. For example: "I really like these broccoli trees. They are one of my vegetables for today. Let's see how many fruits and vegetables have I had today? How many have you eaten so far today?"

### 3. **Read a book about food, about fruits and vegetables...AND about 5 A Day**

Check out a book like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* or *I Eat Fruit* or *I Eat Vegetables* or *Blueberries for Sal*. Read the book at circle time and talk about the fruits and/or vegetables in the book. For example: "What fruits and vegetables did the caterpillar eat? What do you like to eat for your five fruits and vegetables every day?"

### 4. **Use a growth chart to talk about growing up healthy...AND about 5 A Day**

A growth chart is an easy way to reinforce the 5 A Day message - and to relate 5 A Day to growing big, strong, healthy and happy. For example: "Let's see how tall you are on this chart. What fruits and vegetables will help you grow taller? How many fruits and vegetables have you eaten today?"

### 5. **Sing a song about fruits and vegetables...AND about 5 A Day.**

Talk about a fun way to reinforce the 5 A Day message! You can sing *Apples and Bananas* or other songs. Refer to the Art and Music section of this module for suggestions.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way



## 5 A Day and Circle Time

Circle time is an important part of a young child's day and is a great place to introduce children to 5 A Day. Children are able to express, interact and participate throughout the learning process. Many circle-type activities work well as either small group or one-on-one opportunities to teach children new concepts and new skills.

**This section includes detailed instructions for 5 A Day circle time activities:**

- Where Do Fruits and Vegetables Grow?
- What's Inside (Seeds?)
- All Kinds of Fruits and Vegetables
- Eating the Alphabet

**Related 5 A Day activities from other "Building a Healthy Foundation: It's All About You!" training modules:**

### **Tickle Your Appetite**

- Classroom Activities: A Mystery Bag (4-23)
- Classroom Activities: What's Hiding Inside (4-31)
- Family At-Home Activities: Seeds grow and so do we (5-17)
- Community Activities: Fun, Food, Folklore (6-15)
- Handout: Children's Books about Food, Eating, and Health (7-33)

### **Color Me Healthy**

- Circle Time: Eat a Rainbow of Colors (pg. 3)
- Circle Time: Brown Paper Bag Mystery (pg. 7)
- Circle Time: Where Do the Colors Grow (pg. 12)
- Color Me Healthy News

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Circle Time (continued)



### Other 5 A Day Circle Time Activities

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
<b>5 A Day Mystery Box/Bag/Can</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cardboard box, "feely" bag or large can with a hole just big enough for child's hand</li> <li>Fruit and veggie items</li> </ul>	Place a produce item in the box, bag or can. Pass it around and have children guess what the item is.
<b>5 A Day Picnic Basket</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plastic food modules - fruits, vegetables and others if desired</li> <li>Small picnic basket</li> </ul>	First child puts in an item and says "I'm going on a picnic and I am taking an apple." Next child says I'm taking an apple and a pear." Game continues with children adding items and repeating all foods.
<b>5 A Day Circle Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pictures of fruits and vegetables</li> <li>Tape</li> </ul>	Use pictures of fruits and vegetables as markers for circle area or put them on nametags. Assign kids to an item or let them choose different produce items.
<b>Flannel Board Sorting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flannel board</li> <li>Fruit and vegetable flannel pieces</li> </ul>	Let kids sort pieces into fruits and vegetables on different sides of board, or sort produce pieces, by color, shape or texture.
<b>5 A Day Sorting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dairy Council food models</li> </ul>	Let kids sort models into fruits and vegetables on different sides of board, or sort produce pieces, by color, shape or texture.
<b>5 A Day Identification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food models, food cards or stickers (e.g., 3-D plastic, flannel board or cards from Dairy Council)</li> </ul>	Work with children to name all the different fruits and vegetables. Discuss different forms of same item (e.g., apples, apple sauce and apple juice).
<b>5 A Day Finger Puppets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit and vegetable finger puppets</li> <li>Paper</li> <li>Crayons or markers</li> </ul>	Use puppets to introduce new foods in a circle and let children see puppets sing songs, do plays and make up stories about fruits and vegetables.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Cooking/ Tasting Activities



Cooking – and eating – can be some of children’s favorite activities. Certainly there is no better way to reinforce 5 A Day than with the yummy taste of fruits and vegetables. All you need is a fun, tasty recipe and the right ingredients. Plan any food-related activity carefully. These activities work best with small groups of children rather than the whole class. Assemble all food, utensils and supplies. Introduce the activity to the children. Go over safety, cleanliness and the cleanup process before beginning the activity. Remember that food activities work best for eating instead of “art work.” Be sure that children eat only their own edible creation.

### **Here are some things that children can do at different ages:**

#### **3-year-old children can:**

- Use a knife to spread peanut butter. Show each child how to hold the knife. (one knife for each child)
- Stir or mix wet and dry ingredients together like pancake mix.
- Mix salad ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. A damp cloth under the bowl can help to keep it from slipping.

#### **4-year-old children can:**

- Peel oranges or hard-cooked eggs.
- Mash foods like beans with a fork for a dip or eggs for egg salad.
- Knead dough.

#### **5-year-old children can:**

- Use a knife for cutting soft foods like cooked potatoes or bananas.

### **This module includes detailed instructions for 5 A Day cooking/ tasting activities:**

- How to do a 5 A Day Tasting Party
- All Apples Are Not Alike
- Making Bunny Salad
- Build a Butterfly Salad
- Kid-Friendly Recipes
- Five Tasty 5 A Day Recipes

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Cooking/ Tasting Activities (continued)



### Food Safety Reminders

Keep in mind all applicable safety and sanitation rules for your center as you plan your activities. Modifications may be necessary to meet all local requirements. Make it routine to sanitize the work area and wash hands at the beginning and the end of all activities with food.

When using jarred items such as peanut butter or fruit spread, consider having an adult scoop out the amount of the “spreadable” and place it on wax paper. This will keep little hands from contacting and contaminating the food inside. Adults need to thoroughly wash any fresh fruit or vegetable used in the classroom. The children can “help” after the food item has been well-washed by an adult.

Always watch children during meals and snacks. Young children, ages 2 to 3 especially, are at risk of choking on food. Many of the cooking and tasting activities are best done with small groups of children to allow for adequate supervision. Following sanitation guidelines and providing close supervision will help assure the safety of the children as you explore this section of the module.

### Related 5 A Day activities from other “Building a Healthy Foundation: It’s All About You!” training modules:

#### Tickle Your Appetite

- Classroom Activities: Let’s Vote: Taste, Touch, Smell (4-25)
- Family At-Home Activities: Have Fun With Food on a Rainy Day! (5-7)
- Family At-Home Activities: Play with the Colors and Smells of Food! (5-11)
- Family At-Home Activities: Fun in the Kitchen (5-15)
- Family At-Home Activities: Roots, Stems, Leaves, Fruits, Flowers, and Seeds (5-21)
- Handout: Cool and Fruits Summer Treats (7-31)
- Handout: Tastes Of The World (7-35)
- Handout: Cooking With Herbs (7-49)

#### Nibbles For Health

- Nibbles For Health 20: Juice or Fruit Drinks?



# 5 A Day the Preschool Way



## 5 A Day and Cooking/ Tasting Activities (continued) Other easy 5 A Day cooking/tasting activities

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
5 A Day Meal Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pictures of fruits and vegetables</li> <li>▪ Food models</li> <li>▪ Plastic or paper plates and cups</li> </ul>	Encourage children to plan meals that include fruits and vegetables.
Plan a Tasting Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A variety of new fruits and or vegetables</li> <li>▪ Bowls for cut fruits and vegetables</li> <li>▪ Paper plates and napkins</li> <li>▪ Knife for teacher's use</li> </ul>	Cut each fruit or vegetable into bite-size pieces. Allow children to choose which foods they will try. Record the new foods that they liked using a tasting chart as included in the module.
Make Ants on a Log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Celery</li> <li>▪ Peanut butter</li> <li>▪ Raisins</li> <li>▪ Plastic knives for children to spread peanut butter</li> <li>▪ Paper plates</li> </ul>	Stuff celery with peanut butter and dot with raisins. Have an adult scoop the peanut butter out onto wax paper to keep children's hands out of the jar.
Make Orange Smiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oranges</li> <li>▪ Knife for teacher's use</li> </ul>	Cut oranges in quarters; peel quarters part way down.
Make Citrus Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Citrus fruit of choice (lemons, limes, oranges, grapefruits)</li> <li>▪ Fruit juicer</li> <li>▪ Knife for teacher's use</li> </ul>	Squeeze citrus fruits. Look at seeds, drink the juice and talk about the taste. Each child must prepare their own.
Friendship Salad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each child brings in a piece of fruit</li> <li>▪ Knife for teacher's use</li> <li>▪ Large bowl</li> <li>▪ Small paper bowls or plates</li> <li>▪ spoons</li> </ul>	Discuss the fruits, cut in pieces and put together to make a Friendship Salad.
Banana Crunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bananas</li> <li>▪ Orange juice</li> <li>▪ Granola or other crunch cereal</li> <li>▪ Knife for teachers use</li> <li>▪ Individual Bowl</li> <li>▪ Paper plates</li> </ul>	Cut bananas in slices. Dip in orange juice and granola or cereal. Eat and enjoy. Be sure each child eats only his/her own creation.
Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cherry tomatoes</li> <li>▪ Small scoop or spoon</li> <li>▪ Stuffing of choice (cottage cheese, egg salad, yogurt dip, salad dressing)</li> <li>▪ Plastic spoons and paper plates</li> </ul>	Teacher scoops out hole in well-washed tomatoes. Each child puts in the stuffing.
Fruit Smoothies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fresh, frozen or canned fruit of choice.</li> <li>▪ Vanilla yogurt</li> <li>▪ Apple juice</li> <li>▪ Blender</li> <li>▪ Cups</li> </ul>	Mix all ingredients in a blender. Pour into small paper cups for tasting.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way



## 5 A Day and Cooking/ Tasting Activities (continued)

### Other easy 5 A Day cooking/tasting activities (continued)

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
Compare Textures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Raw diced carrots</li><li>▪ Cooked diced carrots</li><li>▪ Paper plates</li></ul>	Present the two textures of carrots for the children to explore touch and taste. Talk about how the same food can be prepared in different ways. Ask the children to volunteer other ways they may eat carrots.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Physical Activity



Children love to move their bodies and use their imagination! Channel their energy into a learning activity. They will have fun and learn at the same time. The benefits of being active every day are numerous. Including physical activity with healthy eating will help deliver a consistent message to young children and will help them develop habits that will last a lifetime.

**This module includes detailed instructions for 5 A Day and physical activity:**

- Coconut Bowling
- Citrus Tic-Tac-Toe
- Carrot Hop
- Fruit Flexibility

**Related 5 A Day activities from other “Building a Healthy Foundation: It’s All About You!” training modules:**

### **Color Me Healthy**

- Color Me Active: A Day at the Beach (pg. 16)
- Color Me Active: A Visit to Mr. and Mrs. Smith’s Farm (pg. 18)
- Color Me Active: What’s Going on at the Park? (pg. 20)
- Color Me Active: The Birthday Party (pg. 22)
- Color Me Active: Climb Every Mountain (pg. 24)
- Color Me Active: A Trip to the Fire Station (pg. 26)
- Color Your Classroom: Fruit and Vegetable Twister (pg. 32)
- Color Me Healthy News

### **Nibbles For Health**

- Active Living for Families
- Child’s Play
- Let’s Move...Cold Weather Fun!
- Let’s Move...Warm Weather Fun!



# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Physical Activity (continued)

### Other 5 A Day and Physical Activity Activities

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
5 A Day Dramatic Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Plastic fruit and vegetable models</li><li>▪ Plastic 5 A Day grocery bags or shopping baskets</li><li>▪ Play money</li></ul>	Set up a produce department in a dramatic play area. Allow kids to “shop” in produce area.
5 A Day Relay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Real or plastic fruits and vegetables.</li></ul>	Use a 5 A Day theme for physical activity games like a fruits or vegetable toss relay.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Art/Music



Art projects are a great way to involve children in the process of learning. They help children develop their creativity and expression. The natural variations in size, shape and color of fruits and vegetables help children learn these concepts. Music is another great way for children to express themselves. We have included some variations of common songs that include fruits or vegetables, or both in the lyrics.

**This section includes detailed instructions for 5 A Day art/music activities:**

- Colors of Fruits and Vegetables
- I Can Eat Five A Day!
- Fruit or Vegetable Necklace
- Make Your Own Fruit and Vegetable Cards
- Songs About Five A Day
- Eat a Rainbow

**Related 5 A Day activities from other “Building a Healthy Foundation: It’s All About You!” training modules:**

### **Tickle Your Appetite**

- Classroom Activities: Make Your Own Mobile to Take Home (4-13)
- Artwork: Paul and Paula Pear
- Artwork: Beth Broccoli
- Artwork: Fruit Group
- Artwork: Vegetable Group
- Artwork: Apple Tree
- Artwork: Vegetable Garden

### **Color Me Healthy**

- Color Your Classroom: Fruit and Vegetable Garland (pg. 31)
- Color Me Healthy Songbook (pg. 36)
- Color Me Healthy News

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Art/Music (continued)



Other easy 5 A Day art/music ideas include:

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
<b>5 A Day Placemats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank paper placemats or paper cut to placemat size</li> <li>Sponges cut into various fruit and vegetable shapes</li> <li>Paint</li> <li>Laminating machine (optional)</li> </ul>	Have children create a placemat for themselves or a family member with sponges and paint. Let paint dry and laminate (if desired) for longer use.
<b>Design-A-Meal Plates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White paper plates</li> <li>Pictures of foods from magazines or other sources</li> <li>Glue</li> </ul>	Have children design a meal on their plate. See how many fruits and vegetables they can find to fit into their meal.
<b>5 A Day Stamps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit and vegetable stamps</li> <li>Non-toxic stamp pads</li> <li>Paper</li> </ul>	Allow children to create designs with stamps for art project. Stamp kids' hands whenever they taste a new fruit or vegetable item.
<b>5 A Day Collage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old magazines, seed catalogs or garden catalogs</li> <li>Paper</li> <li>Blunt scissors</li> <li>Glue</li> </ul>	Cut out pictures of fruits in vegetables. Make a collage.
<b>5 A Day Rainbow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old magazines, seed catalogs or gardening catalogs</li> <li>Paper</li> <li>Glue</li> <li>Blunt scissors</li> </ul>	Find pictures of all yellow, green, red, orange, blue, purple and white fruits and vegetables. Make a rainbow with all the colors found in the fruits and vegetables.
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Mobile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut-out pictures of fruits and vegetables that children have drawn</li> <li>String or yarn</li> <li>Plastic hangers or wooden dowels</li> <li>Glue</li> </ul>	Cut various lengths of string or yarn. Glue the cut out pictures at the end of each string. Tie the other end of the string to the hanger or wooden dowel.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way

## 5 A Day and Field Trips and Gardening



Field trips are yet another way to have fun with 5 A Day. By taking kids out to enjoy fruits and vegetables in a variety of settings, they learn more about produce and have a great time as well. In a child care center with meals, a field trip can be as simple as a visit to the kitchen to see where the daily meals are prepared. If your program receives meals prepared in an off-site kitchen, like in an elementary school, that could also be an interesting destination. Gardening can also be a fun way to introduce fruits and vegetables. Most children enjoy eating what they have helped to grow.

### **This module includes detailed instructions for 5 A Day and field trips and gardening:**

- From the Farm to You!
- Eat and Grow an Avocado
- We Can Grow a Salad!

### **Related 5 A Day activities from other “Building a Healthy Foundation: It’s All About You!” training modules:**

#### **Tickle Your Appetite**

- Community Activities: Farmer’s Market Extravaganza (6-21)
- Community Activities: Supermarket Tour (6-29)
- Handout: How to Grow an Herb Garden (7-45)

#### **Nibbles For Health**

- Nibbles For Health 34: Grow a Family Garden

This section suggests visiting farmers’ markets or touring farms. The website <http://www.ncfarmfresh.com/> lists farmers’ markets, farms as well as providing links to N.C. Farm Fresh where you can focus in on a particular North Carolina product.

# 5 A Day the Preschool Way



## 5 A Day and Field Trips and Gardening (continued)

### Other easy 5 A Day Field Trip or Gardening Ideas

5 A Day FUN	What You Need	What You Do
<b>Growing 5 A Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeds or other plant cuttings</li> <li>Soil</li> <li>Containers</li> </ul>	Have children plant seeds or cuttings and watch them grow. It is particularly effective to plant things that quickly grow into something edible – like radishes and lettuce.
<b>Restaurants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A local restaurant willing to open for a tour.</li> </ul>	Observe quantity food preparation in action. Sites with salad bars can provide lots of opportunities for 5 A Day experiences.
<b>Local Gardens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A willing greenhouse owner, garden club, master gardener, extension agent or parent.</li> </ul>	Arrange for a site visit or invite one of the people listed to come to the classroom to talk to the children about growing fruits and vegetables.
<b>Farmers' Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A local farmers' market.</li> </ul>	Tour a Farmers' Market to take in all the sights, smells and tastes of farm fresh produce.
<b>Farms and Farm Stands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farms or farm stands.</li> </ul>	Tour a farm or visit a farm stand to take in the sights, smells and tastes of farm fresh produce.
<b>Supermarkets and Grocery Stores</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange to tour the produce section of a local supermarket or grocery store with the stores produce manager.</li> </ul>	Meet a 5 A Day expert in the stores produce manager. Sample something new and different as part of the tour.
<b>Grow an Herb "Petting Zoo"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potting soil</li> <li>Gardening pots</li> <li>Herb seeds or plants</li> </ul>	Let children observe herbs growing in the classroom. Encourage a hands on approach with the children. Let them explore texture, smell and taste.